HAVILAND HUGHES

The Opioid Epidemic

By now, Americans are all too familiar with the "opioid epidemic" that has taken over the lives of countless families who have members addicted to pain medications. Almost 5,500 people start to misuse prescription painkillers every day. Prescription opioids have become so widely prescribed that, by 2010, enough prescription opioids were sold to medicate every adult in the United States with a dose of 5 milligrams of hydrocodone every 4 hours for 1 month. The effects have been disastrous.

Drug overdose nearly tripled during 1999-2014. The rate of death from opioid overdose has quadrupled over the same time period. In 2016, drug overdoses killed roughly 64,000 people in the United States, an increase of more than 22 percent over the previous year.

In 2016, the President of the United States declared an opioid and heroin epidemic.[1] In January 2018, the Governor of Pennsylvania declared the opioid and heroin epidemic a statewide disaster emergency.

Haviland Hughes Fights Back

On March 23, 2018, Haviland Hughes filed its first lawsuit against the manufacturers and distributors of opioids. The case was brought on behalf of Lehigh County along with the District Attorney of Lehigh County, James Martin. Cities and counties have been particularly hard hit by the opioid crisis, as they not only have to pay for opioids, they also have to pay the costs of treating opioid addition and other services to mitigate the effects of widespread opioid abuse.

If you, your company, or your fund has paid for opioids, we encourage you to contact Haviland Hughes right away to ensure your voice is heard in this fight against one of the worst drug abuse epidemics and claim your share of any favorable recovery in the lawsuit. For more information, you can review the Lehigh County Complaint here, or feel free to contact one of our attorneys.

---

[1] *See* Proclamation No. 9499, 81 Fed. Reg. 65,173 (Sept. 16, 2016) (proclaiming "Prescription Opioid and Heroin Epidemic Awareness Week").